DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 025 360 RC 003 060

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Seminar by Amplified Telephone. A Report and Evaluation.

Nevada Univ., Reno.; Nevada Western States Small Schools Project. Carson City.
[illegible]ns Agency- Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
Pub Date [68]
Note- 14p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.80
Descriptors- Course Descriptions, *Course Evaluation, Course Organization, *Inservice Courses, *Rural Areas, *Small Schools, Teacher Seminars, *Telephone Instruction, Video Tape Recordings
Identifiers- *Nevada

A pilot program is outlined which explored one possible way by which teachers in small schools might have access to quality in-service education. The use of the amplified telephone and the conference bridge technique is described. A general description of the course (a cooperative effort of the Western States Small Schools Project and the University of Nevada) is presented, including content, requirements, and method. An evaluation of the course considers content, method of presentation, on-site situations, and participant comments. Conclusions and recommendations for improving the program complete the document. (SW)

ED025360

AMPLIFIED TELEPHONE LECTURE SERIES

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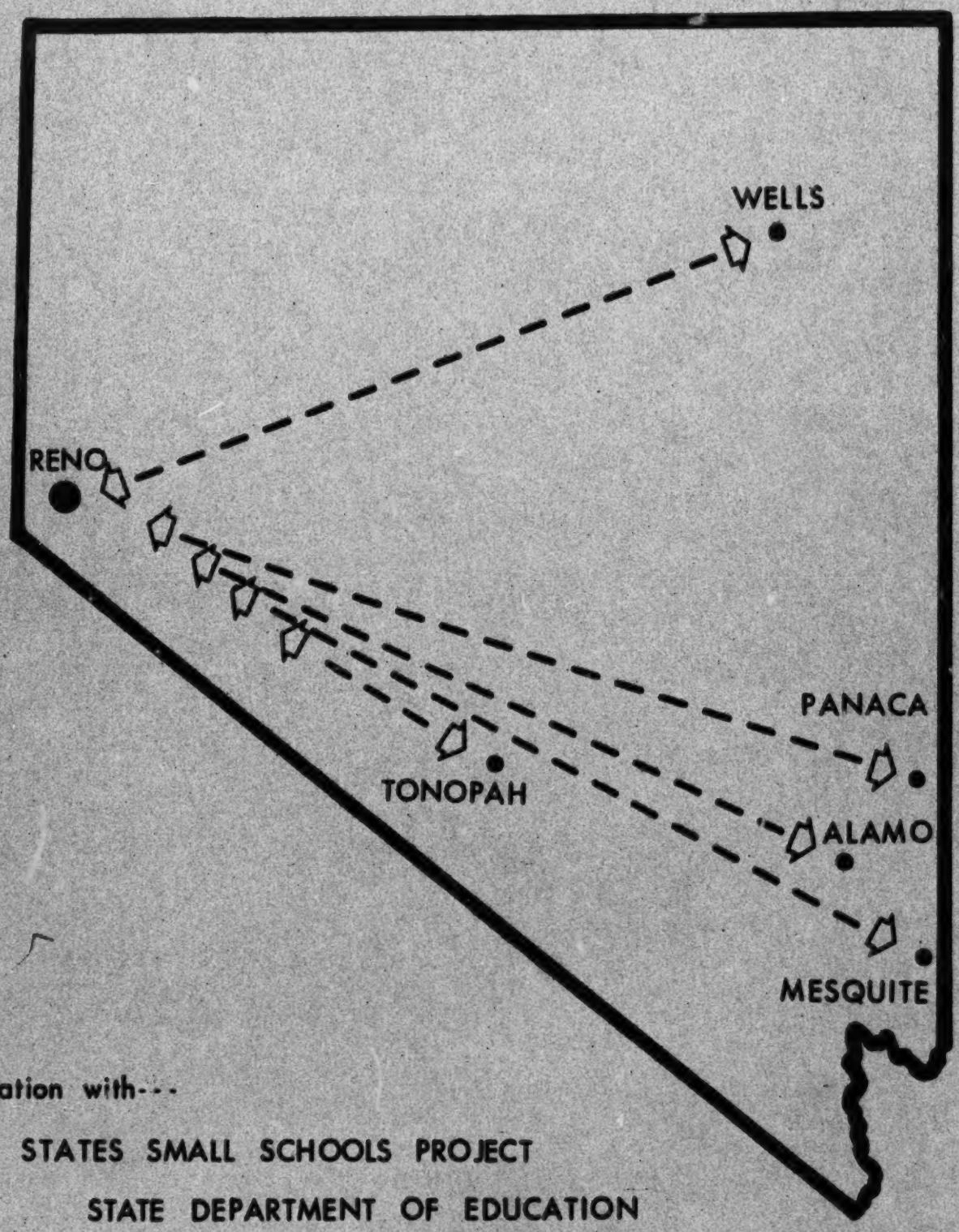

in cooperation with---

WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJECT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

GENERAL UNIVERSITY EXTENSION, UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA

RC003060

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SEMINAR BY AMPLIFIED TELEPHONE

A REPORT AND EVALUATION

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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INTRODUCTION

Within the State of Nevada there are vast areas in which the population is extremely sparse, and in which distances between centers of population, such as they are, are indeed great. (Highway signs erected by the State Highway Department warn travelers that it is "112 miles to the next gas station".) However, in the population centers, there are schools, and within such schools a continuous recurring problem relating to in-service programs has existed for many years.

The institutions of higher learning have attempted to provide in-service programs for many of the teachers in outlying areas. The General Extension Division, for example, has made every effort to offer courses wherever they have been needed, and wherever there could be a number of enrollees sufficient to defray the costs. Such efforts reflect a genuine concern of institutions of higher learning, but because of the necessity of having a specified number of enrollees, participation in extension courses has been limited to a comparitively few areas. The smaller school, having a total faculty of eight, and being located ninety miles from the next school, was still, in effect, denied participation.

In an attempt to explore possible ways in which teachers in small schools might have access to quality in-service education programs, the Western States Small Schools Project and the University of Nevada cooperatively sponsored a pilot program involving the use of the amplified telephone and the conference bridge technique. The program, as it was carried out, is described on the following pages.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The tele-lecture course "Critical Issues in Education," taught jointly by Drs. T. T. Tucker and J. Clark Davis, was recently made available to the member schools of the Western States Small Schools Project in the State of Nevada. The amplified telephone lecture series was devised as a means to reach undergraduate and graduate students now teaching or in administrative positions who live in remote areas of the state. This method of presentation made use of textbooks, discussion groups, tape recordings, transparencies and amplified telephone conference calls.

The experimental course was organized and presented by the Department of School Administration, College of Education, University of Nevada, in cooperation with the Western States Small Schools Project and the Extension Division of the University of Nevada. The costs of the amplified telephone seminar experiment were partially subsidized by the Western States Small Schools Project which paid for the telephone toll charges. Each student paid $15.00 to underwrite the remaining cost of the experiment. The Extension Division of the University of Nevada assumed the responsibility for administering the course.

Personnel from five communities participated in the course. The communities and schools were all located in remote rural areas of the state. The areas involved were: Tonopah, Panaca, Alamo, Mesquite, and Wells.

One semester hour of graduate credit or undergraduate credit was offered; forty-four persons received credit. Each student taking the course received either undergraduate or graduate credit. There were no auditors.

COURSE CONTENT, REQUIREMENTS, AND METHOD

A. Content

The following topics were utilized for the course. Some topics were discussed over two lecture periods and others were discussed for just one period of instruction.

Developing American Character Through the Public School

Education in Our American Culture

Can Education Change?

Development of Attitudes and Policies in Public Education

Public Relations and Its Influence on Education

The Pursuit of Excellence

Should Students be Grouped According to Ability?

Homework or Not

B. Course Requirements

Course requirements were as follows:

1. Read the complete text: Crucial Issues in Education, Third Edition, Ehlers and Lee.
2. Select seven readings, analyze the readings presenting the major ideas and state why you agree or disagree with the article. Length of this paper should range from a minimum of seven pages to a maximum of eleven typewritten pages. (You may want to refer to periodicals wherein you may find writers dealing with the same issues. Be sure to add these to your bibliography.) Use your preferred style of writing and footnoting.

3. Take a final examination over material presented.

4. Complete an anonymous evaluation form concerning the effectiveness of the course.

C. Methodology

A tape was sent each week to all communities providing them with subject material for the topic to be discussed on the next tele-lecture. Some of the tapes were prepared by national figures, such as Margaret Mead and Leslie Kindred, while other tapes were prepared by the Department of School Administration.

Whether the student listened to the tape individually or in a group was left entirely to the discretion of the student. Some listened to the tapes as a group and others listened to the tapes when they could work it into their daily schedule. The idea for having the students review the tapes before the tele-lecture was to provide background information that could be used for the discussion period allotted each week.

The tele-lecture presentation usually lasted from forty to forty-five minutes once a week. For a portion of the time the lecturer discussed the topic for the day. Then time was allotted to the participating students to ask questions and discuss their views concerning the day's topic.

For most of the tele-lectures, the communities were sent transparencies that were to be used during the tele-lecture presentation to emphasize some of the major points that the lecturer wished to make. All students were urged to spend as much time as possible in discussion with other members of the class on the selected topics.

EVALUATION

The evaluation of the student's work was made by reading a paper presented by each member concerning critical issues selected from their text. Also, a final examination was given with five essay questions covering the basic material of the lectures.

Student evaluation of the course was mandatory and this was accomplished by an anonymous completion of an evaluation form. The following information is the complete data gathered from the students' course evaluation sheets. The comments have not been edited and therefore are accurate quotes from the participants.

Student Course Evaluations

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
A. Course Content:				
1. I would rate the material content of the course:	15	26	1	
2. In terms of adaptability to my situation, I would rate the course content:	15	20	6	
3. As a resource book for this course, I would rate Ehlers, Critical Issues in Education:	24	16	1	1
4. The overall course requirements were:	6	19	8	7
B. Method of Presentation:				
5. There was always plenty of time to listen to the taped lectures before the tele-lecture presentation:	3	11	11	17
6. The quality of the taped lectures in terms of voice, diction, speed, etc., was:	11	22	7	2
7. In general, the telephone reception at our listening center was:	11	28	2	
8. The tele-lecture call provided enough time for questions and discussions by students involved:	12	17	12	

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
C. On-Site Considerations:				
9. The option of choosing the time to listen to the tapes was:	12	13	11	6
10. The timing of the telephone conference calls so as to reach participants in the school situation was:	20	17	4	1
11. I would rate the feature of not having to travel to a college center of instruction as:	37	3	2	
12. I would rate our on-site arrangements for listening to tapes, listening to conference calls, etc., as:	20	16	4	1
13. In comparison with off-campus college education courses that I have taken, I would rate this course:	11	27	3	
14. In comparison with off-campus college or education workshops, I would rate this course:	15	24		
15. If another tele-lecture course were repeated with modifications, I would recommend it to my friends:	Yes: 36		No:	
16. I would rather have a two-unit tele-lecture course than one-unit:	Yes: 36		No: 5	

Leadership and Decision-Making ---------- 24

The School Staff and Public Relations ---------- 22

Contemporary Readings in Education ---------- 20

D. General Comments Concerning The Course:

I am disappointed that two credits were not given for the amount of work required.

****

The course provided me with an opportunity to do some reading and study which I would not have done. The association and discussion with teachers in the topics presented was a worth while experience. The tele-lecture course meets the needs of teachers out in the state to participate in extension work.

****

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this new and different type of college class, and believe it has much potentiality for us in Nevada. The tapes were interesting.

****

I believe the work required would merit two units.

****

More visual aids could improve the course.

****

I enjoyed being one of the "firsts" to achieve stimulating thought plus "credit" via the telephone. I think this is one evidence that we are not in a "rut", and I dare say the people of 20 years ago visualized this medium as one of our useful "tools" in education.

****

Monday or Wednesday is a better day. Too much work for one credit - I'm against homework!

****

Worth-while. Too much work for one credit.

****

Amount of work required for one credit was too great.

****

I feel that, for the amount of work involved, this course should have been a two unit course.

****

I was particularly pleased with the book. There were several times when questions went unasked.

****

I feel that too many assignments were made for one credit. The book was extremely good and very worth-while to read every bit of it. In this area we should have more classes of this type. Let's not penalize rural teachers educationally.

****

Some of the tapes did not reach us in time so that all were not able to hear the tape before the lecture. I believe the time of the year had something to do with this as it was during the Christmas rush of mail. I believe that two credits could have been given for the course as we spent one hour a week in class, a half-hour and sometimes more a week listening to the tape recordings, and we read a text. A paper was written also. I liked the course, and I feel that our school could have received a real boost if all the faculty had taken it so we would have some goals with all the students. The whole faculty needs to work together to teach students to be "good American citizens," as Dr. Tucker gave us as our first goal.

****

Students at listening center should get together for at least 15 minutes to discuss and react to each others views on the subject.

****

I would have benefited from a regularly scheduled period for the taped lectures. Some of the taped lectures in terms of voice, diction, speed, etc., were much better than others. On the whole they were good. The classes we had with questions and discussions were more meaningful. Could have had more student participation. The class started before our upper elementary grades were dismissed. Later we adjusted the class schedule and it was much better. I enjoyed this class very much. I was impressed with the text and intend reading more along this line.

****

On the whole, the course was satisfactory. I did not care for the text as it was very uninteresting and very little connection between it and the lectures. All the lectures were good but the last one by Dr. Tucker on homework was worth the whole course. It was excellent. I wish all of our teachers could have heard it; especially the junior high and senior high teachers.

****

Some of the tapes were poor. (Diction too fast in speaking, subject matter poor). Some of the tapes arrived late and with extra duty such as lunch duty, playground duty and bus duty, all the teachers could not hear all the tapes. Dr. Tucker was and is an excellent lecturer.

****

Too much work for the credit earned. Movies add other audio-visual material where available.

****

There was a general feeling that too much work was required for one unit of credit. Time of the course was not good for us, but best for all concerned. A night should be selected and devoted to just the course itself. Time before and after the tele-lecture is needed. Regular attendance was almost impossible. We need another course or many more of this nature.

****

I considered the tape material less stimulating than any other part of the materials. I think there was plenty of requirements for an hour credit. The tapes did not reach our school in time to hear them before the lecture. I enjoyed the class and hope to take the next if given.

****

The amount of work necessary to complete the requirements of this one unit course - - I would hope future courses would have more realistic requirements. I would also hope that the lectures could be a bit more organized and a little more than just one man's opinion. Granted - some of the lectures were worth-while, others left room for improvement. The tapes should have been previewed and evaluated before they were sent out to the schools. They could be sent out a bit earlier also. It would facilitate large numbers of students, being limited by number of tape recorders, in being able to get an opportunity to hear the tapes before the lectures.

****

Disappointed in tapes. Often inconvenient to play and awkward. Mimeographed summaries of subjects prepared by instructors would be far preferable. I'm not sure the telephone adds too much to a regular correspondence course. This course was too heavy for one credit.

****

This could be a means of reaching into the field with a much needed service that is not now available for many of us. I hope there will be other course offerings of this nature.

****

I felt that the text used for this course was excellent. Some of the tapes were also excellent, but many were not. I feel that the quality of the course would be up-graded if the text were used as a basis for discussion and not the tapes.

****

I thought the course was very worth-while; I felt the term paper was quite a large assignment on top of the other work, for just one credit. I hope we will have the opportunity to take other tele-lecture courses of this nature.

****

I rated #10 low because we were always 10 - 15 minutes late in getting started. We need more courses like this. The course time requirements were high for only one unit of credit.

****

In my varied educational experience, there weren't too many education courses of practical value. The method of the class was excellent in being able to reach so many people in a simulated classroom experience, but the subject matter is just as useful as the majority of educational courses; not too.

****

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. According to the opinions of the participants as well as the instructors, the tele-lecture provides a satisfactory instructional technique for reaching remote areas with college level courses.

2. The data leaves no doubt that the course requirements were greater than should be normally expected for one credit of work. If another course is presented in the future, it is recommended that two hours of credit be given for this course instead of one.

3. One drawback in the method of presentation was the fact that a number of students did not have time to listen to the taped lectures before the tele-lecture presentation. This can easily be corrected by sending the tapes out earlier.

4. According to the evaluative data, more time for questions and discussions should be provided for in future tele-lectures.

5. The on-sight arrangements for listening to tapes, listening to conference calls, and watching overhead projections were very satisfactory.

6 Some of the selected tapes left something to be desired in the opinion of many of the participants. A future course could utilize tapes of prepared research data by the instructor as well as a few choice tapes of outstanding speakers on the topics chosen for the course.

7. A very positive reaction to the tele-lecture course was indicated by all participants in that they would recommend another tele-lecture course to their friends.

8. The school administrator in each of the communities supervised the program. All did an excellent job. However, for future tele-lecture

courses, it is recommended that the people selected as leaders for the course in the communities should be paid an honorarium for accepting the additional work and responsibility.

9. The costs of this type of a program are higher than the usual classroom lecture course because of the telephone toll charges. It is recommended that students be charged an additional fee above the regular credit fee to offset the additional costs of the program. The combination of regular credit fee plus a special fee should be sufficient to cover toll, installation, and instructional costs.

10. Technical problems can result when the telephone equipment differs between the several schools. Every effort should be made by those concerned (Extension Division, local school districts, etc.) to insure a high degree of compatability of equipment.

11. There is no doubt in the minds of the instructors that a tele-lecture course can be taught in a very efficient manner to a large number of people in remote areas of the state. It is recommended that other departments and colleges experiment with this media to provide a service to those people who are not able to attend the University during the academic year because of the geographical problems of distance.